PEAKS OF SHALA

cliffs or passed the ends of smaller mountain ranges that ran down to the opposite banks of the Lumi Shala. There were villages over there; we saw them built against the mountains like clumps of gray swallows' nest—the villages of [376] Shoshi, with whom Shala was in blood. At the foot of the waterfall streams that dashed down their cliffs we saw now and then a little mill, flooded with water, its roof of slate hardly showing above the flood, where in drier season Shoshi ground its grain or put the loosely woven white woolen cloth to be soaked in the running water and pounded by paddle wheels until it shrank into the feltlike fabric that makes their garments.

[233] 246 Here and there a red-brown or gray-white moving patch at the foot of a clump of mangled trees announced that a little shepherd was there, clinging to a tall stump and cutting twigs to throw down to the goats and sheep; we were too far away to see him. And there were other clumps of trees green with uncut leaves; always near these we saw, bronze brown among the gray rocks, structures taller than a man and shaped like a beehive. These were trees that the axes spare until the leaves are fully grown and filled with sap. Then the branches are cut and piled in a circle, the cut ends outward and the leaves to the center, layer upon layer, until the beehive shape is completed, when they are weighted down with rocks. The leaves dry, remaining green and nutritious, and slowly through the winter the curious silos are demolished armful